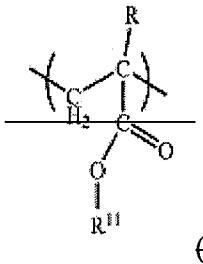
AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (**Currently amended**) A resin for a resist, comprising structural units (a) derived from an (α-lower alkyl)acrylate ester as a principal component, wherein

said structural units (a) comprise structural units (a1) derived from an (α-lower alkyl)acrylate ester comprising an acid dissociable, dissolution inhibiting group, ~~and~~ structural units (a2-1) derived from an (α-lower alkyl)acrylate ester comprising a lactone-containing monocyclic group, and structural units (a3) derived from an (α-lower alkyl)acrylate ester that comprises a polar group-containing aliphatic hydrocarbon group, wherein

~~said structural units (a1) comprise structural units (a1-1) derived from an (α-lower alkyl)acrylate ester and represented by a general formula (a1-1) shown below:~~

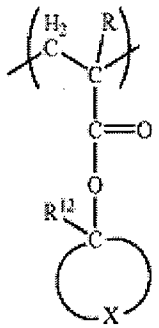


~~(a1-1)~~

~~[wherein, R represents a hydrogen atom or a lower alkyl group, and R^{11} represents an acid dissociable, dissolution inhibiting group that comprises a monocyclic aliphatic hydrocarbon group and comprises no polycyclic aliphatic hydrocarbon groups], and wherein~~

~~said polar group-containing aliphatic hydrocarbon group is a hydroxyl group-containing aliphatic hydrocarbon group~~

said structural units (a1) comprise structural units (a1-2) represented by general formula (a1-2) shown below:



(a1-2)

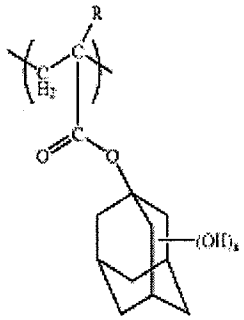
(wherein, R represents a hydrogen atom or a methyl group, R^{12} represents an ethyl group, and X represents a group which, in combination with a carbon atom to which said group R^{12} is bonded, forms a group in which one hydrogen atom has been removed from a cyclohexyl group),

said structural units (a2-1) are structural units represented by general formula (VII) shown below:

(VII)

(wherein, R represents a hydrogen atom or a methyl group), and

said structural units (a3) are structural units represented by general formula (VIII) shown below:



(VIII)

(wherein, R represents a hydrogen atom or a methyl group; and n represents an integer of 1, and the hydroxyl group is bonded to position 3 of the adamantyl group).

2. (**Canceled**)

3. (**Canceled**)

4. (**Original**) A resin for a resist according to claim 1, wherein said structural units (a) also comprise other structural units (a4) derived from an (α-lower alkyl)acrylate ester that comprises a polycyclic aliphatic hydrocarbon group, which differ from said structural units (a2) and (a3).

5. (**Original**) A positive resist composition comprising: (A) a resist resin component that exhibits increased alkali solubility under action of acid, and (B) an acid generator component that generates acid on exposure, wherein

said component (A) comprises a resin for a resist according to claim 1.

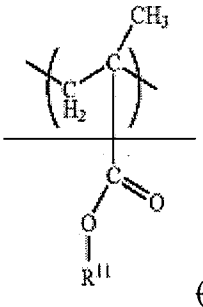
6. (**Original**) A positive resist composition according to claim 5, further comprising a nitrogen-containing organic compound.

7. (**Original**) A method of forming a resist pattern, comprising the steps of: forming a positive resist film on top of a substrate using a positive resist composition according to claim 5, conducting a selective exposure treatment of said positive resist film, and performing alkali developing to form a resist pattern.

8. (**Currently amended**) A resin for a resist, comprising structural units (a) derived from an (α-lower alkyl)acrylate ester as a principal component, wherein

said structural units (a) comprise structural units (a1) derived from an (α-lower alkyl)acrylate ester comprising an acid dissociable, dissolution inhibiting group, ~~and~~ structural units (a2) derived from an (α-lower alkyl)acrylate ester comprising a lactone-containing monocyclic or polycyclic group, and structural units (a3) derived from an (α-lower alkyl)acrylate ester that comprises a polar group-containing aliphatic hydrocarbon group, wherein

~~said structural units (a1) comprise structural units (a1-1-1) derived from a methacrylate ester and represented by a general formula (a1-1-1) shown below:~~

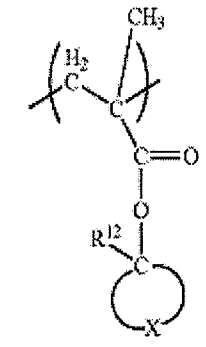


~~(a1-1-1)~~

~~[wherein, R^{11} represents an acid dissociable, dissolution inhibiting group that comprises a monocyclic aliphatic hydrocarbon group and comprises no polycyclic aliphatic hydrocarbon groups], and wherein~~

~~said polar group-containing aliphatic hydrocarbon group is a hydroxyl group-containing aliphatic hydrocarbon group~~

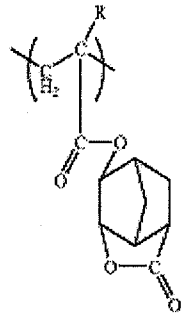
said structural units (a1) comprise structural units (a1-2-1) represented by general formula (a1-2-1) shown below:



(a1-2-1)

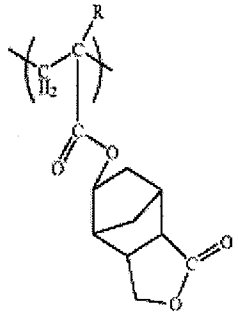
(wherein, R^{12} represents an ethyl group, and X represents a group which, in combination with a carbon atom to which said group R^{12} is bonded, forms a group in which one hydrogen atom has been removed from a cyclohexyl group),

said structural units (a2) are structural units represented by general formula (V) or (VI) shown below:



(V)

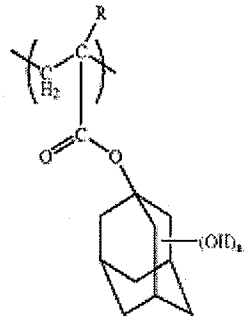
(wherein, R represents a hydrogen atom or a methyl group);



(VI)

(wherein, R represents a hydrogen atom or a methyl group), and

said structural units (a3) are structural units represented by general formula (VIII) shown below:



(VIII)

(wherein, R is a hydrogen atom or a methyl group; and n represents an integer of 1, and the hydroxyl group is bonded to position 3 of the adamantyl group).

9. **(Canceled)**

10. (**Canceled**)

11. (**Original**) A resin for a resist according to claim 8, wherein said structural units (a) also comprise other structural units (a4) derived from an (α-lower alkyl)acrylate ester that comprises a polycyclic aliphatic hydrocarbon group, which differ from said structural units (a2) and (a3).

12. (**Original**) A positive resist composition comprising: (A) a resist resin component that exhibits increased alkali solubility under action of acid, and (B) an acid generator component that generates acid on exposure, wherein

said component (A) comprises a resin for a resist according to claim 8.

13. (**Original**) A positive resist composition according to claim 12, further comprising a nitrogen-containing organic compound.

14. (**Original**) A method of forming a resist pattern, comprising the steps of: forming a positive resist film on top of a substrate using a positive resist composition according to claim 12, conducting a selective exposure treatment of said positive resist film, and performing alkali developing to form a resist pattern.

15-17. (**Canceled**)